

FAIRFIELD COUNTY



Getting children ready for school.



**Parents as Teachers**

**Imagination Library**

**Countdown to Kindergarten**

**1000 Books before  
Kindergarten**

**Child Care Scholarships**

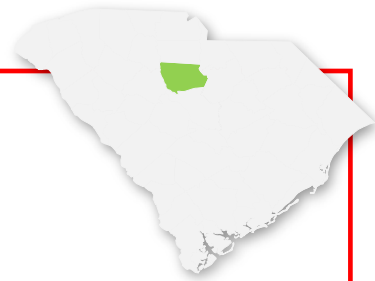
# Annual Report

2016-17



## OUR VISION:

Every South Carolina child  
will arrive at kindergarten  
ready to succeed.



## By The Numbers

Indicator	SC	Fairfield County
Children Under Five	293,134	1,522
Children In Poverty	24.4%	33.4%
3 <sup>rd</sup> Graders Scoring "Does Not Meet" Standard in Reading	22.2%	32.5%
Births to Mothers With Less Than a High School Diploma	15.0%	12.7%

KIDS COUNT data provided by



- Since inception, Fairfield County First Steps has leveraged \$1,141,685 from sources outside state government. **That's \$.40 for every dollar received**
- **397 hours of support and guidance** were provided to 17 families in our Parents As Teachers Program
- **Distributed over 6500 books** to children in our community
- Improved parenting practices through **15.5 hours of group meetings**
- **Total families served: 337**
- **Total Children Served in FY17: 588**

## Fairfield County First Steps

101 North Congress St. Ste. 1  
 Winnsboro, SC 29180

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**Executive Director**  
 Patti Wilkes  
[PYWilkes@truvista.net](mailto:PYWilkes@truvista.net)

**Patti Wilkes**  
 Executive Director

While the office of Fairfield County First Steps saw changes in personnel, the programs did not have any major changes. We continue to serve families through Parents As Teachers, serving 20 families now that we have a full-time Parent Educator. We also offer Imagination Library, 1000 Books Before Kindergarten, Countdown to Kindergarten and Childcare Tuition Assistance programs. Additionally, we partnered with the local DSS office to add a library to their lobby.

As a part of our continued collaboration with the Fairfield Community Coordinating Council, the Council joined forces with the Fairfield Memorial Hospital Foundation, to write a grant through the Duke Endowment. First Steps will receive Needs and Resources information through this grant.

Fairfield County First Steps is now partnering with the Palmetto Project in an effort to increase the number of children receiving books through our Imagination Library program. Any child living in Fairfield County is eligible to receive books through this program until their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday.

United Way of the Midlands continues to partner with First Steps for our Countdown to Kindergarten program. We employed five local kindergarten teachers for the Summer 2016 CTK program. The Fairfield County School District once again covered the cost of the toolkits for this program. The 50 identified students have been enrolled in the K5 programs across Fairfield County that began August 2016.

In partnership with the Fairfield County Library, Fairfield County First Steps held our Second Annual Literacy Walk. Again the walk was led by Sheriff Will Montgomery. The walk encompassed a short path along the walking trail at historic Mt. Zion through town and finished at the library where families were welcomed to the celebration of the library's Summer Reading kick-off.



Healthy Start



Family Strengthening



Early Intervention



Quality Child Care



Early Education



School Transition

## County Programs

- Parents as Teachers
- 1000 Books before Kindergarten
- Imagination Library
- Countdown to Kindergarten
- Childcare Scholarships

## State Programs

- Early Head Start
- First Steps 4k



# What We Do

Each of the six color blocks of the First Steps logo represents a core area of service, outlining our comprehensive strategy to prepare children for long-term school success.

With **measurable outcomes across each of its six school readiness strategy areas**, First Steps is getting results.



## Healthy Start

We begin with a focus on providing a healthy start to life. This includes prenatal and post-partum services for both mother and baby. In 2007, First Steps collaborated with key philanthropic and agency partners to bring Nurse-Family Partnership to SC having a significant impact on reducing premature births and Medicaid costs.



## Quality Childcare

Quality childcare starts with quality childcare providers. Our quality enhancement and training strategies lead to improved teacher-student interaction, which research shows has a significant impact on a child's development and success in school.



## Family Strengthening

Our home visitation strategies, such as Parents as Teachers, Parent-Child Home and Early Steps to School Success, are helping parents understand their responsibilities to care for and be positive models for their children. As a result of First Steps' intervention and parenting support, 66% of clients initially assessed at "low" levels of parenting have achieved moderate or high levels of parenting skill.



## Early Education

Private-public partnerships through First Steps 4K have led to significant cost efficiencies in the delivery of publicly funded 4K. One recent analysis suggests First Steps is achieving comparable results, without the need for costly capital construction, for 80 cents on the dollar. Early Head Start expands quality early learning and family support to infants and toddlers.



## Early Intervention

Children's school readiness depends on their healthy growth and development. First Steps helps identify potential delays early through developmental screenings and referring children to BabyNet and other early intervention resources.



## School Transition

Each of the corresponding blocks of services leads ultimately to the goal of transitioning children successfully to school. Programs like Countdown to Kindergarten are ultimately preparing children for school success.

**Based on the needs of our community, Fairfield County First Steps focuses its investments in Quality Childcare, Family Strengthening, and School Transition.**

# Parents as Teachers

**Parents are their child's first and best teachers.**

## Program Description

Parents as Teachers (PAT) is an evidence-based home visiting program designed to build strong communities, thriving families and children who are healthy, safe and ready to succeed. PAT services include:

1. **Personal Visits** at least twice monthly
2. **Monthly Group Connections** with other PAT families
3. **Screenings and Assessments** to identify developmental concerns
4. **Connections to Outside Resources** that families may need to succeed

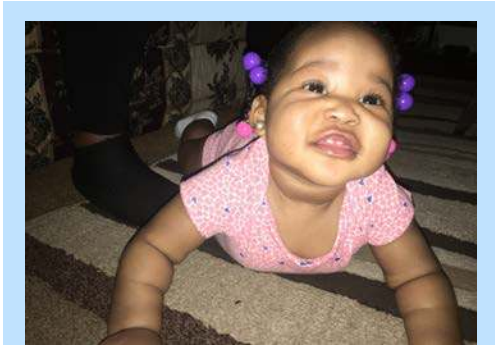
**Fairfield County First Steps serves families in greatest need. Among our PAT families:**

95% live in poverty

42% are teen custodial parents

42% of the children have been exposed to caregiver depression

30% of children weighed less than 5.5lbs at birth



Sadriana:

" I want to stay a part of this program because it makes me feel like I am learning to become a better mother to my child."

## PAT by the Numbers 2016-17

Families Served	17	
Children Served	20	
Total Home Visits	359	
Hours Spent Serving Families	365	
Average gain, <i>Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale</i> (pre-to-post):	3.09	3.35

### This year, our Parents as Teachers program:

- ✓ Averaged 2.19 home visits per family
- ✓ Identified and addressed 15 potential developmental delays and 22 delays
- ✓ Out of 17 families, 64 referrals were made to meet the various needs of our families.
- ✓ Improved parenting practices made great strides in the area of language and reading. All parents are now reporting that they read to their child a minimum of three times per week.
- ✓ Improved literacy skills are shown by the parents awareness of the importance of recalling information and predicting the outcomes of stories.

**Thank you to our partners!**

Fairfield County DSS  
 SC BabyNet  
 Fairfield County School District

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 Winnsboro, SC 29180  
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# Other Literacy

**Outside of a dog, a book is a man’s best friend. Inside of a dog, it’s too dark to read.** —Groucho Marx

## Program Description

As stated in our mission, we strive to do whatever it takes to be sure “Every child arrives at school ready to succeed.” With that mission in mind, we started the 1000 Books before Kindergarten program to be certain that we are reaching EVERY child before they reach kindergarten.

Fairfield County First Steps distributed over 2000 books to the CD4 classrooms across Fairfield County in FY 2017. Parents participated by completing the Reading Logs of their children and returning them to the teacher. The teachers participated in scheduling times for us to visit with the students. The students, our most important participants, became active listeners.

Fairfield County First Steps partnered with Fairfield County DSS providing a Library in the lobby of the local DSS/DHEC office. Books were monitored by the receptionist. An important thing to report is that no books were destroyed while there in the lobby! These books were free to any who visited the DSS lobby.



Reading four to five books per visit and making at least nine visits per school year makes 1000 Books Before Kindergarten a highlight for the CD4 students and teachers!

## Other Literacy by the Numbers 2016-17

Children Served	202
Visits to CD4 classes	108
Books distributed through DSS	350
Books distributed through 1000 Books before Kindergarten	2073

**This year, our other Literacy programs:**

- ✓ Distributed over 2000 books to CD4 students through the 1000 Books Before Kindergarten program
- ✓ Made 9 visits to each of 12 classrooms, reading four to five books each visit
- ✓ Distributed 350 books through the library at our local DSS office

**Thank you to our partners!**

- Fairfield County Library
- Fairfield County School District
- First Book

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**A person who won't read has no advantage over one who can't read.** —Mark Twain

## Program Description

According to the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, the peak period for brain development related to language is around **nine months of age. One of the easiest and most effective ways to build this capacity in young children's brains is to read to them.**

Fairfield County First Steps is the local sponsor of Dolly Parton Imagination Library, which provides free, age-appropriate books to children age birth to 5 years. Operated by the Dollywood Foundation, Imagination Library is currently in more than 1,600 communities internationally and mails books to about 700,000 children each month.

Children who register with Fairfield County First Steps receive one book per month by mail through the month of their fifth birthday. Each book is carefully selected by a committee of educational specialists.



My child loves to get mail that is sent directly to her. Books are a great find in the mailbox!

## Imagination Library by the Numbers, 2016-17

Children Served	314
Books Given to Children 0-5	3472

### This year, our Imagination Library program:

- ✓ Provided one book per month to 314 children.
- ✓ 100% of our clients of other First steps programs are registered for the Dolly Parton Imagination Library program.
- ✓ Was funded in part by a fundraiser held by the First Steps Partnership Board.



### Thank you to our partners!

- Dollywood Foundation
- Fairfield County Library
- Fairfield County School District
- Palmetto Project

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# Child Care Scholarships

**"It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men."**

— Frederick Douglass, abolitionist and statesman

## Program Description

Access to quality child care is essential for children while away from their primary caregivers. Yet, of those families income-eligible for child care assistance in South Carolina, only a small fraction receive it due to lack of funds. In the absence of nurturing and consistently available family, friends or neighbors, parents are faced with few - or no - affordable care options.

**Fairfield County First Steps serves families in greatest need. Among our scholarship families:**

- 100% ... live in poverty
- 40% ... were exposed to parental depression
- 20% ... were exposed to domestic violence
- 30% ... had delays or potential delays

In addition to regular monitoring of child care providers that receive First Steps scholarships, First Steps conducts at least one developmental screening each year with scholarship children and connects families to needed services within the community.

Every child who is a part of the childcare scholarship program is enrolled in to the Dolly Parton Imagination Library. The parents in this program are also required to attend the monthly Parent Workshops that are held on the third Tuesday of each month.

### Scholarships by the Numbers, 2016-17

Children Served	10
Providers Served	2

*As a high school parent, there is no way I could have graduated without the assistance of First Steps.*  
 ~Tyneshia

**100% of the parents surveyed reported satisfaction with the Parent Workshops that are required in this program.**



Having a positive relationship with the father is important in the life of a child. Shannon attends most events with his child and the child's mother while also working two jobs.

### This year, our Scholarship program:

- ✓ Provided 10 children with scholarship assistance so their parents could work or attend school
- ✓ Identified and addressed potential developmental delays among 3 scholarship children
- ✓ Made 8 connections for families to services such as adult education, food assistance, housing/clothing assistance, and 3/4K referral
- ✓ Supported 2 small businesses in Fairfield County by subsidizing child care tuition for families who would not otherwise be able to afford quality care

### *Thank you to our partners!*

- Winnsboro Woman's Club
- Fairfield Medical Center
- Italian Garden Restaurant

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**Bringing parents and teachers together as partners sets the foundation for success in school.**

## Program Description

Countdown to Kindergarten (CTK) is a summer home visitation model connecting rising kindergartners and their families with their future teachers. The program is designed:

- ✓ to forge strong and lasting home-school relationships,
- ✓ to acquaint children and families with the state and classroom expectations to increase the likelihood of school success,
- ✓ to increase parent involvement in the early grades (particularly in hard-to-reach communities), when children's learning is foundational for life success; and
- ✓ to increase public awareness of the importance of school readiness and provide ways for parents and communities to impact children's early school success.

Countdown to Kindergarten integrates all of the following:

**Home Visitation.** Teachers make six visits over the summer to the homes of participating students and families. Children and families are introduced to actual materials used in kindergarten and are given a Kindergarten Transition Toolkit to keep.

**Learning Celebration.** The last visit is a "field trip" to the school where the child will attend class in the fall.

**Public Awareness.** Throughout the summer, First Steps releases tips to media to help parents and caregivers get children ready for kindergarten.

## \*CTK by the Numbers, Summer 2016

Children Served	41
Families Served	39
Home/School Visits	205

*\*CTK program data is for June-August 2017 whereas CTK fiscal data includes expenditures from July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017.*



*"I can't believe how much this program has meant to my son."*

## This year, our Countdown to Kindergarten program:

- ✓ Increased the parents relationship with their child's teacher from the pre-survey of 35% to post-survey of 66.61% as someone the parent knows and trusts well
- ✓ Increased the child's relationship with the teacher from 22.5% to 66.67% as someone the child knows and trusts well

## Thank you to our partners!

Fairfield County School District  
 Kaplan Early Learning Company  
 Fairfield County Library

Like us on Facebook!  
 Countdown to Kindergarten-South Carolina

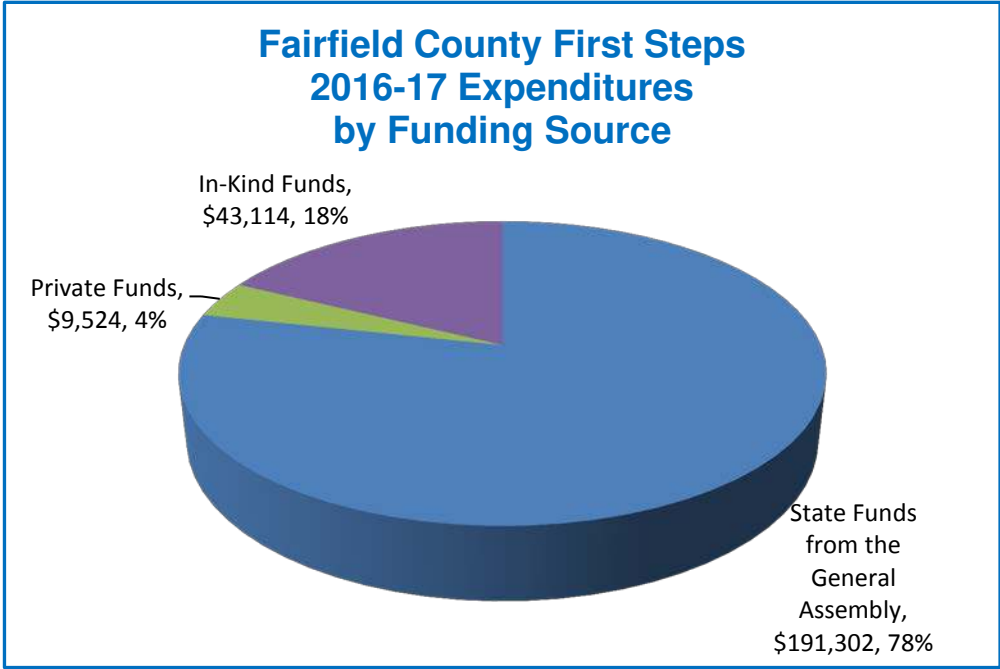


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# Financial Impact



**Total 2016-17 Expenditures: \$ 243,940**

**State Funds Leveraged in 2016-17\*: 27.5%**

\*Percentage of state dollars matched by additional federal, private, and/or in-kind funds

### 2016-17 Expenditures by Strategy

	State \$	Federal \$	Private \$	In-Kind \$	Total \$	% of 2016-17 Expenditures
Parents as Teachers	\$54,558	\$0	\$1,286	\$0	\$55,845	23%
Imagination Library	\$2,000	\$0	\$4,648	\$43,114	\$49,762	20%
Countdown to Kindergarten	\$9,855	\$0	\$1,560	\$0	\$11,415	5%
Child Care Scholarships	\$48,588	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$48,588	20%
1000 Books before Kindergarten	\$8,443	\$0	\$1,474	\$0	\$9,917	4%
Program Support	\$49,816	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$49,816	20%
Administrative Support	\$18,042	\$0	\$556	\$0	\$18,598	8%
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$191,302</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$9,524</b>	<b>\$43,114</b>	<b>\$243,939</b>	

*Unaudited numbers for the period July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017*

**Since inception, Fairfield County First Steps has leveraged \$1,141,685 from sources outside of state government. That's 41 cents for every state dollar.**

# Thank you supporters!

Through partnerships and collaborations, as well as financial support from grants and contributions, Fairfield County First Steps leverages state dollars to enhance and expand services to children and families.

## Funding Support

State of South Carolina: \$200,000  
(through South Carolina First Steps)

United Way of the Midlands

Local citizens of Fairfield County



*Working closely with local childcare providers is a must. Pictured here are the owners of one of our local facilities.*

## In-Kind Support

Winnsboro Woman's Club

Fairfield County School District

Dollywood Foundation

Italian Garden Restaurant



*Having a blast with our parents!*

## How your support helps children in Fairfield County:

- ✓ \$30 provides a young child a book per month for one year!
- ✓ Donations are accepted for any programs that you might have a particular interest in.
- ✓ Fairfield County participates in Midlands Gives each May.

**HOW TO GIVE:** Mail your donation to: **Fairfield County First Steps**  
PO Box 215  
Winnsboro, SC 29180

## Save the Date!

Fairfield County First Steps Annual Meeting – January 29, 2018 (tentative)

Week of the Young Child – April 16 – 20, 2018

Midlands Gives Day – Tuesday, May 1, 2018

**Support Fairfield County First Steps today through a tax-deductible donation, or volunteer!**

## Working their way off of public assistance

Having children removed from the home by DSS is never a situation we want any of our families to be in. However, as we found with one family, this was the reality check that they needed. Not having good role models can oftentimes be the crutch that a young parent leans on. This is a time when Parents As Teachers can make a big difference in the life of a family. This year, we are happy to report that one family went from having DSS as a constant in their family, to working their way off of public assistance. These parents dug in and found that they are ultimately where the buck stops for their children. Plans were immediately put in place for these parents to secure stable reliable employment, find suitable housing for a family of four, and for anger management to become a part of therapy.



Additionally, the family had intensive visits with our Parent Educator, both with and without the children. It didn't take long for this family to become a complete unit again. As sad as we were to lose them as clients, we could not be happier that this reunited family now has the tools needed to make wise choices for their family on a daily basis.

## First Steps goes to cooking school!

Clients in our First Steps programs were given the opportunity to participate in a seven week cooking class through DHEC. A trip to the grocery store was the first lesson. While there, the participants were taught about the importance of reading labels and how to shop the exterior walls for the healthiest ingredients. At the end of this class, participants were challenged to plan and purchase foods for a meal using only \$10. All were successful! For the next six weeks, participants were given lessons in preparing healthy meals and snacks for families. These lessons included using tools properly, cooking, adding various foods for desired flavors, and clean up. At the end of each class, participants were able to take home a bag of ingredients to make these recipes for their families.





# Getting children ready for school.

## The Goals of First Steps

- (1) provide parents with access to the support they might seek and want** to strengthen their families and to promote the optimal development of their preschool children;
- (2) increase comprehensive services** so children have reduced risk for major physical, developmental, and learning problems;
- (3) promote high-quality preschool programs** that provide a healthy environment that will promote normal growth and development;
- (4) provide services** so all children receive the protection, nutrition, and health care needed to thrive in the early years of life so they arrive at school ready to succeed; and
- (5) mobilize communities** to focus efforts on providing enhanced services to support families and their young children so as to enable every child to reach school healthy and ready to succeed.

-- Section 59-152-30



Interested parents with Medicaid-eligible children who live in eligible school districts can contact any participating provider to complete an application for free, full-day 4K. To view a list of participating First Steps 4K providers, visit:

<http://scfirststeps.org/4k>



### EARLY HEAD START – CHILD CARE PARTNERSHIP

Low income families with children 0-36 months, and families with infants or toddlers with special needs, are invited to apply for this year-round, comprehensive program. Available in the following counties: Allendale, Anderson, Bamberg, Berkeley, Dillon, Georgetown, Laurens, Lexington, Newberry, Orangeburg, Saluda and York, and coming soon to Fairfield and McCormick counties. To apply, visit:

<http://scfirststeps.org/ehs/>



[I CAN] is First Steps' public awareness campaign for school readiness, in support of the state's Profile of the Ready Kindergartener. Includes resources for parents, providers and communities to learn what they can do to support school readiness.

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